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RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5890  
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 0125  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 4132  
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001480

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/IR AND SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/17/2019

TAGS: [IR](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN/IRAN: TURKMEN PUSH FOR JOINT  
COOPERATION ON LEGAL ISSUES

REF: ASHGABAT 0284

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Sylvia Reed Curran. Reasons 1.4(b) and  
(d)

1. (C) Pursuant to a December 2008 MOU between the governments of Iran and Turkmenistan (reftel), Turkmenistan is reportedly anxious to expand cooperation with Iran in several key areas, including extradition, Iranian service of process formalities, and the resolution of border-related disputes involving land or farm animals. In a recent conversation with Iran Watcher, Batyr Geldiyev, a Strategic Analyst with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Ashgabat, detailed his agency's plans to advance mutual legal assistance between the two countries as part of a larger UNODC project aimed at promoting legal cooperation between governments in the region.

#### LANGUAGE (AND OTHER) BARRIERS

2. (C) Geldiyev said the Turkmenistan Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) approached UNODC for assistance in working with Iran, and wanted help with even "very basic information," such as a copies of the Iranian constitution or statutes in Russian, help with interpreting Iranian legal documents, and contact information for Iranian government and judicial officials. (He noted that the prosecutors were somewhat befuddled after a first reading of Iran's constitution, at both its length and theocratic references). Other than the constitution, very few Iranian documents are available in Russian, he said. In addition, most Turkmen officials are not proficient in English, the language that Iranians use to communicate with foreigners, further complicating communications between them. Consequently, as part of its project, UNODC is planning to provide English language training to officials from the PGO's International Relations department and others.

#### RESOLVING THE STATUS OF IRANIAN DETAINEES

3. (C) According to Geldiyev, the Turkmen government's chief impetus for wanting better legal cooperation with Iran are the dozens of truck drivers and others (the exact number is unknown) who have been arrested for allegedly smuggling narcotics from Iran into the country. Rather than bringing

formal criminal charges against them, Turkmen authorities reportedly hold the Iranian detainees without trial for long periods, releasing some on Turkmen holidays when major amnesties are announced. The two countries have no formal extradition treaty between them, so the lack of even basic communication mechanisms has left Turkmenistan in limbo vis-a-vis the detainees.

14. (C) COMMENT: Iran and Turkmenistan are enjoying enhanced relations in the energy sector, with a significant increase in gas sales to Iran and a just-completed gas pipeline connecting the Dovletabad gas field to northern Iran (which will be officially opened in December). President Berdymuhamedov has visited Iran twice in the past year, and during one of the visits reportedly had an extended one-on-one meeting with Supreme Leader Khamenei. Nevertheless, as the foregoing attests, contacts or cooperation between lower level Iranian and Turkmen officials have thus far been minimal. END COMMENT.  
CURRAN